

CHAPTER XVIII

“Since the Uttarayana Marga is lit by the holy Splendour of Jnana, it is praised as the Sukla Marga or the White Path. The Dakshinayana Marga is dark, filled with Thamas and Ajnana; so it is called the Dark Path or the Krishna Marga. Those who discard the body and move along the White Path and reach the Stage of Liberation or Moksha, which is devoid of Delusion, which is the Seat and Source of Brahmananda, from which there is no return to this world of Name and Form, this is the arena of embodied beings. Those who leave the body during the Dakshinayana and move along the Dark Path, have to bear again this physical encasement called Deha (body), subject to birth and death.

“Uttarayana is not so much a period of time; it is a state of mind. Those who discard the body with the glory of Self-knowledge move along the Uttarayana Marga and

those who die in ignorance of their Atmic reality move along the Pithryana, or Dakshinayana or the Dark Path.

“Of the Gunas, Sathwa Guna is pure and effulgent; the Thamo Guna is dark and so they are distinguished by the opposite colours of White and Black. Again there are two *Nadis*, *Ida* and *Pingala* by name, subtle nerves, *Ida* to the left and *Pingala* to the right of the *Sushumna*. The *Ida-naadi Marga* is the Lunar Path and the *Pingala-naadi Marga* is the Solar Path. The Yogis proceed along the Solar and the others along the Lunar path. This is another of the unobserved mysteries.

“The end of everything that is born is death. *Samyoga* leads to *Viyoga*; construction must result in the destruction of that which is constructed. It is the law of nature that birth ends in death and death leads to birth. The stage which knows no coming and going is the stage when the Universal Brahman is visualised, for since Brahman is all-pervasive, where is the other place from which the ‘coming’ can be effected and to which the ‘going’ can be performed?

“There is no need to doubt whether such a stage is within the reach of all, whether all can achieve this victory. Nor is any special effort, or peculiar good fortune or a specially designed act necessary. It is enough if the mind is always fixed on *Paramatma*, if the Lord is meditated upon without break. That will cleanse the mind; the delusion clogging it will disappear. This by itself comprises *Moksha*, for what is *Moksha* but *Moha-kshaya*, the decline of

Delusion? A person who has achieved this Moha-kshaya will attain Brahmahva, the stage of Brahman, howsoever he might die. Such a person is called a ‘Jnani.’”

At this, Arjuna put in a query. He said, “Krishna, I do not quite understand the meaning of what you call Jnana. Is it the knowledge learnt through the ear from the teacher? Or is the knowledge culled from the Sastras? Or is the knowledge imparted by those rich in actual experience? Which among these, liberates man from bondage?”

Krishna replied, “The types of knowledge you mentioned now are all useful at some stage or the other of one’s spiritual development. But by none of them can you escape the cycle of birth and death! That which releases you is known as Anubhava Jnana, the knowledge that you yourself experience; that alone can help you to be free. The teacher can be of some help in the process, but he cannot show you your real Self. You have to visualise it yourself. Besides, you have to be free from vices like envy. Then only can you be called a Purna Jnani, one who has attained full Jnana. He who has faith in this Jnana, who is devoted in acquiring it, and who is full of yearning to earn it, only such a person can realise Me.

“He must be free from envy. Besides, he must be earnest, steeped in Sraddha (steady faith). Earnestness is essential even for the performance of the smallest act by man. Not man alone, but bird and beast, worm and virus, all have to be earnest to succeed. When you have no

earnestness or Sraddha in the act, you cannot gather the fruit.

“Arjuna! I am the Witness; through Me, this Prakruthi, this conglomeration of the Five Elements called Prapancha, all these moveable and immovable objects, are formed. Through Me as the Cause, the Prapancha behaves in various ways. Fools who cannot understand Me as the Highest Principle and as the Master of all the Elements whose Will they have to obey, take Me to be just a man. Some great men reverently meditate on Me as Brahman. Others worship Me under various Names and in various Forms; some others worship Me through Jnana Yajna and Atma Yajna.

“Whatever the name, whatever the form of worship, I am the Recipient; for I am the Goal of all. I am the only One. There is no Other. I Myself become the Worshipped, through My many Names and Forms. Not only this, I am the Fruit of all actions, the Bestower of the Fruit, the Basis, the Prompter, the Promoter of all. Why recount and repeat? I am the Force behind the Birth, Existence and Death of every thing and of every life. I am the Birthless, Deathless Cause.

“Realise Me, the Primal Cause. That is indeed Moksha. He is the *Jivanmuktha* (liberated even while alive) who attains that Moksha. Therefore, Arjuna, if one yearns to become a Jivanmuktha, to attain Moksha, he must accomplish some simple disciplines. That is to say, he has to eradicate fully the attachment to the body.”

Hearing this, Arjuna intercepted, “Krishna! Do you speak of this sadhana of complete detachment as a simple discipline? Is it so easy to practise? Even accomplished ascetics find it difficult and you recommend it so glibly to people like me! You speak of it as if it were a very simple task. But it is a formidable endeavour. I feel you are putting me on trial with such suggestions. Can I ever attain that state? Can I win Liberation, can I attain Moksha? I have no hope,” he said and sat dispirited.

Krishna was watching him steadily losing courage. He went close to him and patted his back in a reassuring manner. He said, “Arjuna, there is no need to get startled and desperate just for this. No, no one will get faith as soon as one hears of it. One must delve into it with the help of reason; then it will be found that this discipline is not as hard as it is imagined to be. To become completely detached it is not necessary to grow matted hair, wear ochre robes and torture the body into skin and bone. It is enough if you do all acts as dedicated to the Lord, without any desire. This is the secret of Liberation.

“Performing all activities in this manner is not difficult. Only, one should have steady faith and earnestness. Of course, these are essential for every type of activity. So, you can realise that they are indispensable for spiritual activity too.

“Whoever among devotees dedicates all acts to Me with no other thought, whoever meditates on Me, serves

Me, worships Me, remembers Me, know that I am always with him, ever providing for him in this world and the next; I bear the burden of his *Yoga Kshema*. Do you hear Me?” asked Krishna, patting Arjuna again on the back and imparting courage to his drooping heart.

This statement about the Lord guaranteeing the Yoga Kshema of the devotee has given rise to a great deal of misunderstanding. Even Pundits, not to speak of others, have failed to grasp its real import. The commentators on the Geetha propagate this Declaration in manifold ways.

This most sacred Sentence is as the navel to the Geetha-body. The navel of Vishnu was the place where Brahma took birth. This sloka is the navel or place of nativity for those who thirst for Brahma Jnana. If this Sloka is followed in practice, the entire Geetha can be understood.

There are a number of interesting stories current about this Sloka. I shall give one example: A learned Pundit was once giving discourses on the Geetha in the august presence of a Maharaja. One day, the turn of this Sloka came:

Ananyaaschinthayantho maam
Ye janaah paryupaasathe
Theshaam nithyaabhiyukthaanaam
Yogakshemam vahaamyaham.

The Pundit was explaining enthusiastically the many-sided implications of this Sloka, but the Maharaja shook his head and said: “This meaning is not correct.” He continued

to dispute the correctness of every one of the explanations the Pundit gave. The poor Pundit had won meritorious distinctions at the court of many a Maharaja and was honoured by them all with pompous titles. He felt as if he was stabbed, when the Maharaja in the presence of the entire band of courtiers condemned his explanation of the Sloka as “wrong.” He smarted under the insult. But plucking up courage, he again set upon his task; and collecting all his scholarship, he plunged into an eloquent discourse on the multiple meaning of the words, “Yoga” and “Kshema.” The Maharaja did not approve of even this; he ordered: “Find out the meaning of this Sloka and having understood it well, come to me again tomorrow.” With this, the Maharaja rose from his throne and went into the inner apartments.

The Pundit lost even the few grains of courage left in him. He was weighed down by anxiety. He tottered under the insult. He reached home and, placing the copy of the Geetha aside, he fell on the cot.

Surprised at this, the Pundit’s wife said, “Tell me why you came home from the Palace today in such grief? What exactly did happen?” She rained one anxious question after another, so that the Pundit was obliged to describe to her all that had happened, the insults heaped on his head, the command with which the Maharaja sent him home, etc. The wife listened calmly to the account of what had happened and after pondering deeply over the incident, she said, “Yes, it is true. What the Maharaja said is right. The explanation you gave for that Sloka is not the correct one. How could

the Maharaja approve it? The fault is yours.” At this, the Pundit rose in anger from the cot, like a cobra whose tail is trodden hard. “What do you know, you silly woman? Am I inferior in intelligence to you? Do you, who are engaged in the kitchen all the time, cooking and serving, claim to know more than I? Shut your mouth and quit my presence,” he roared.

But the lady stood her ground; she replied, “Lord! Why do you fly into such a rage at a statement of mere truth? Repeat the sloka once again to yourself and ponder over its meaning. You will then arrive at the right answer yourself.” Thus by her soft words the wife brought calm into the mind of her husband.

The Pundit started analysing the meaning of each individual word in the Sloka. Ananyaas-chinthayantho maam, he began, deliberately and slowly, repeating aloud the various meanings. The wife intervened and said, “What benefit is it to learn and expound the meanings of *words*? Tell me what your intention was, when you approached this Maharaja. What was the purpose?” At this, the Pundit got wild. “Should I not run this family, this home? How am I to meet the cost of food and drink, of clothes and things, for you and all the rest? It is for the sake of these that I went to him, of course, or else, what business have I with him?” he shouted.

The wife then replied, “If you had only understood what Lord Krishna has declared in this Sloka, the urge to go to this Maharaja would not have arisen! If He is worshipped without any other thought, if one surrenders to Him, if at all times the mind is fixed on him, then the Lord

has declared in this Sloka that *He* would provide everything for the devotee. You have not done these three. You approached the Maharaja, believing that he would provide everything! That is where you have gone against the meaning of this verse. That is the reason why he did not accept your explanation.”

Hearing this, that reputed scholar sat awhile, ruminating on her remarks. He realised his fault. He did not proceed to the Palace the next day. Instead, he got immersed in the worship of Krishna at home. When the king inquired why the Pundit had not appeared, courtiers said that he was staying at home and had not started out. The king sent a messenger, but the Pundit declined to move out. He said, “There is no need for me to go to anyone; my Krishna will provide me with everything; He will bear My Yoga Kshema Himself. I suffered insult because I did not realise this so long, being blinded by eagerness to know the manifold meanings of mere words. Surrendering to Him, if I am ceaselessly engaged in worshipping Him, He will Himself provide me with all I need.”

When the messenger took this message to the Palace, the Maharaja proceeded to the dwelling of the Pundit, on foot. He fell at the feet of the Pundit, saying, “I thank you sincerely for explaining to me this day, out of your own experience, the meaning of the Sloka which you expounded yesterday.” Thus, the King taught the Pundit that any propagation of spiritual matters which does not come out of the crucible of experience is mere glitter and show.

Even today, many learned men who go about discoursing on the Geetha and doing propaganda for it, do not observe its principles in practice. They are engaged in simply expounding to the world the valueless rind, the textual meaning, the *sense* of the words and nothing more. Trying to spread the Geetha, without actually practising it, is tantamount to ruining the cause and insulting the sacred book. They extol the Geetha as the very breath of their life, as the Crown of all scriptures, and as having emanated from the Lips of the Lord Himself.

They show so much reverence for the Book that their eyes overflow with tears at the very mention of its Name. They place it on their heads. They press it on their eyes. They keep it in their shrines and offer Puja to it with great bursts of demonstrative devotion. All the respect, all the worship is only for the paper, the book!

If indeed they have reverence for the Words of the Lord, the contents of the book, they would have striven to put them into practice, is it not? No, they do not strive, they have no iota of experience. If they have the experience, none of them would barter the spread of that experience for money. They would yearn only for Grace.

Not even one in a million among the *Geethapracharaks* today, among those who talk about their mission of spreading the Geetha, has the yearning for the Grace of the Lord. No, if they have that yearning, they would not have thought of income or of money.